

**DRAFT**  
**Zoning Board of Adjustment**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**December 8, 2015**

**Members:** Steve Filipi, Gretchen Wittenborg, Bob Handy, Jack Ernst and David Maxson, Isotrope, LLC, consultant to the Board, was also seated at the table.

**Others Present:** Susan Silverman, selectmen's representative, abutters present – Lynn Hay and ???

**CTO:** 7:05 PM.

**7:00 PM Public hearing. Blue Sky Towers, LLC** application for a variance to install a multi-user Wireless Communications Facility outside of the Town's Wireless Facility Communications Overlay District, consisting of a 140 foot monopole tower within a fenced compound located on the 20 acre parcel known as 36 Webber Lane, Map 11, Lot 30-1, Rural District.

Wittenborg noted that she had called Mr. Maxson with two questions, asking was the Blue Sky application similar to other applications and he said yes; and if the Board needed more information after this meeting can they still ask him. He said yes, however, he could not provide legal advice.

Filipi noted that the Board had asked the applicant for a comparison of sites within the Wireless Overlay District and to include T-Mobile sites that are in the T-Mobile pipeline, whether in or outside the WCFOD.

Earl Duval re-introduced himself as the Attorney for the applicant, Blue Sky Towers, LLC, James George as the Site Acquisition Manager for the company, and Ryan Monte De Ramos, radio frequency engineer for T-Mobile, prospective carrier on this tower. Mr. Duval apologized for the delay in getting the research requested by the Board done too late to circulate prior to the meeting, adding that they had sent the material to Mr. Maxson just this afternoon.

Mr. Duval reported that the Saga Tower is not structurally sound enough to allow T-Mobile to co-locate on it. He provided a letter of opinion from Robert Adair, P.E., principal in All-Points Technology to that effect, stating "It is our opinion that this tower is not structurally adequate to support T-Mobile's proposed mounts, antenna array and associated appurtenances. We do not recommend additional reinforcement of this structure to support the proposed equipment."

Filipi pointed out the large map of the wireless communication facility overlay district (WCFOD) provided by SWRPC, which shows the limits of the overlay district and the excluded districts and lands.

Mr. George described each of the 14 propagation maps presented, and discussed the coverage depicted for each. They showed propagation from existing towers, proposed towers and hypothetical towers at sites both inside and outside the WCFOD at two scales, 2 miles and 5 miles. The propagation depictions were based on an 80 foot tower, rather than a 140 foot tower, which is the proposed height of the tower in their application. Handy wondered why they had propagated at 80 feet on the White Quarry Road site option. Mr. Duval said they chose the 80 foot height because that is the allowed tower height in the zoning ordinance. Mr. George described the T-Mobile target area as being downtown Fitzwilliam. Mr. Maxson asked if propagation had been run for an 80 foot tower at the proposed Webber Lane site. It has not, and he asked for it to be done. The Board also wants to see propagation maps for 140 feet at each of the existing, proposed and hypothetical sites.

Mr. George noted that several of the options were blocked by the topography encountered (including the Pinnacle and Brigham Hill) in the propagation path to the T-Mobile targeted gap in coverage.

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He described propagation from several sites within the WCFOD, along Route 119 East and Route 12 south, noting that elevations were below the elevation at the Webber Lane site.

Filipi asked if the Board had to take into consideration all three of the coverage thresholds, in-car, in-building residential and in-building commercial. There is little commercial development in Fitzwilliam. Mr. Maxson said in-car coverage and in-building coverage are similar in that buildings and cars block propagation similarly. Mr. Ramos added that different structures have different penetration losses. Mr. Maxson noted that it is a significant improvement to get in-car coverage throughout town. He asked if the Board agreed there was no need to see propagation for commercial building coverage. The Board agreed. The Board does want to see propagation for in-car and in-building coverage.

Filipi noted that tower height can be waived by the Planning Board. Wittenborg said the Board had asked for identification of areas with significant gap in coverage. Mr. Maxson said that the applicant has no knowledge of other carriers or their gaps in coverage. Wittenborg said she understood, adding that the legal situation has changed some.

Filipi asked about a Fullam Hill site, with the elevation at 1240 feet, a 140 foot tower may work. Mr. George thought that a tower on Fullam Hill would duplicate the Rindge tower coverage. Filipi suggested looking at siting on Daly Road and Fullam Hill Road. He asked the Board if they had other suggestions. Mr. Maxson noted that as you move away from the center of town the best propagation falls off. He asked for the definition of "town center." Mr. George said it is the intersection of Route 119 and Rhododendron Road. Selectman Silverman corrected him, saying it is Richmond Road that goes into the center of town, not Rhododendron Road.

Wittenborg noted that map # 12 seems to cover all the areas the applicant says are needed. Handy said its still apples and oranges – the Board needs propagation information for 80 foot and 140 foot for existing, proposed and hypothetical towers.

Wittenborg asked why Blue Sky planned a new access point for the proposed Webber Lane site when there is an existing driveway. Mr. George said they couldn't get the width they needed using the driveway. He said the property owner also owns the proposed access land.

Mr. Maxson asked Mr. Ramos to confirm that T-Mobile has no plans to locate on either of the hypothetical tower sites portrayed on the maps, which he did. Mr. Maxson asked that these two sites be removed from the maps in that case. The Saga tower will be removed as well.

Ernst asked if the applicant had explored the possibility of locating on Hayden Hill on West Lake Road. Mr. George said no, because the site is outside the WCFOD. Another suggestion was Webb Hill with an elevation of 1430 feet. Ernst pointed out that Fitzwilliam's growth in the future will not be in the town center, but in the outlying areas. Mr. Maxson said the measure of success is the impact on the community. Filipi asked the Board if it really wanted to go this route, by suggesting sites that were outside the WCFOD. He asked Mr. Maxson to review options and suggest the 2 or 3 best sites in town that would have the most impact.

Mrs. Hay suggested that looking at alternative sites might wait until they had the 140 foot data for sites within the WCFOD.

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Filipi said that folks are saying check out the best sites for the town, even if outside the WCFOD. Mr. Maxson asked if the Webb Hill site should then be investigated. The Board agreed it should, with Filipi adding that he is asking Mr. Maxson to pick the best sites. Mr. Maxson agreed to do so.

Mr. Maxson asked Mr. George to look at the number of square miles of new coverage, rather than the total of square miles covered already, and add both in-car and in-building coverage, both residential and commercial.

There was discussion again about population counts, which Mr. Maxson said might be done by streets and roads. Staff will contact SWRPC for guidance on depicting population.

Wittenborg moved, Handy seconded and the Board voted to continue the public hearing to January 12, 2016 at 7:00 PM.

Attorney Duval said he would compile the list of items the Board wants to see and will send it to Mr. Maxson. Mr. Ramos asked if it was all right not to redo the current maps. Filipi agreed.

The Board reviewed the minutes of the November 10<sup>th</sup> meeting and the edits provided by Mr. Maxson. Wittenborg moved, Ernst seconded and the Board approved the minutes as amended, by the Board and Mr. Maxson.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.